

Mastering the Multilevel Classroom

One of the biggest challenges that teachers across the globe face is how to effectively teach multilevel classes. Planning lessons in such contexts can be even more daunting when dealing with large class sizes.

In this webinar, we will explore strategies that engage students regardless of class size or level, including:

- creating different versions of handouts to present content at multiple levels
- utilizing higher-level students as assistant teachers
- setting up stations that meet the needs of different groups
- pairing students to maximize opportunities to use the language



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Dieter Bruhn



Dieter is a passionate educator, leader, entrepreneur, and cross-cultural expert with more than 25 years of international training experience. He is President and Founder of One World Training, a global training organization located in Colorado.

Throughout his career, Dieter has helped thousands of teachers and other professionals improve their performance. This work has included training and certifying hundreds of teachers in TEFL, as well as delivering teacher education workshops in Pakistan, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar, India, South Korea, Brazil, and Senegal. Dieter has served on the Executive Board of Colorado TESOL since 2005, including two terms as President.



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Mastering the Multilevel Classroom



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Challenges

What challenges do you face when teaching multilevel classes?



Goals

By the end of this session, participants should be able to:

- Recognize that having multiple levels is not a barrier to learning
- Utilize effective strategies that meet the needs of all students
- Design several versions of materials to address different levels
- Describe ways to effectively make use of higher-level students
- Incorporate stations with different activities to address distinct needs

Topics

- Identifying Levels
- Creating Activities for Different Levels
- Implementing Level-Based Stations
- Utilizing Assistant Teachers
- Exploring Final Thoughts



Topics

- **Identifying Levels**
- Creating Activities for Different Levels
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Identifying Levels

- Day 1 and 2 – Icebreakers
 - Build community
 - Make students feel comfortable
- Week 1 – Assessment
 - Writing assignment
 - Other assessments
 - Monitor students
- Ongoing Assessment
 - Monitor students in all skills
 - Make adjustments as needed



Sharing & Questions

How do you identify your students' levels in your classes?



Topics

- Identifying Levels
- **Creating Activities for Different Levels**
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Creating Activities for Different Levels

- Use one context
- Create several activities and handouts based on students' levels
- All students participate at the same time



Speaking (lower level)

A: Where did you go on your last vacation?

B: I went to Halong Bay.

A: How did you get there?

B: I got there by car.

A: Where did you stay?

B: I stayed on a boat.

A: How long did you stay there?

B: I stayed there for three days.

A: What did you do there?

B: I went swimming and visited some caves.

A: What else did you do?

B: I went shopping and bought some souvenirs.



Speaking (higher level, includes “Why” questions)

A: Where did you go on your last vacation?

B: I went to Halong Bay.

A: Who did you go with?

B: I went with my wife.

A: Why did you go to Halong Bay?

B: Because we love the sea and nature.

A: How did you get there?

B: We got there by car.

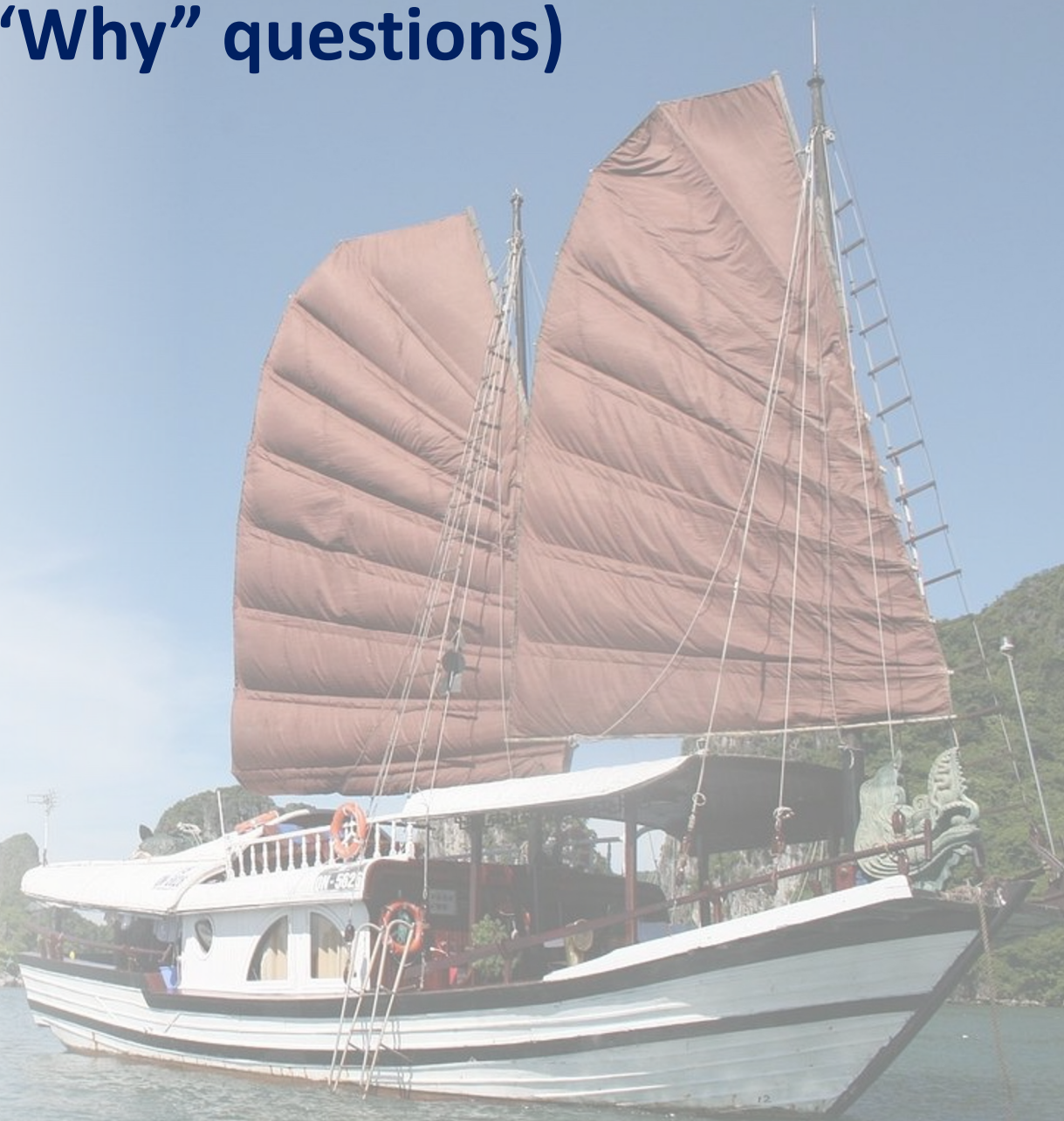
A: Where did you stay?

B: We stayed on a really nice boat.

A: Why did you stay on a boat?

B: Because it's more exciting than a hotel.

---Dialogue continues---



Reading (lower level)

My name is Son. My wife Quyen and I live in Hanoi. On our last vacation, we went to Sapa. We got there by train. We stayed at a homestay for four days. While we were there, we went hiking and visited some villages. We also bought some handicrafts and ate the local food. We had a great time in Sapa!



Reading (lower level)

Questions are simple.

1. Where did Son and Quyen go on their last vacation?
2. How did they get there?
3. Where did they stay?
4. How long did they stay?
5. What did they do there?



Reading (higher level)

My name is Son. My wife Quyen and I love to travel. On our last vacation, we decided to go Sapa, because we love the mountains and cooler temperatures. We thought about going there by car, but it's a long drive, so we went by train instead. Sapa has a lot of hotels and resorts, but we wanted a more authentic experience, so we decided to stay at a homestay just outside of the city. While we were there, we went hiking to some beautiful villages. We also bought some really nice handicrafts and ate the local food, which was delicious. Although we wanted to spend a week there, we were only able to stay for four days. Overall, we had a great time, and we plan to go back again in the future.



Reading (higher level)

Questions include “Why” to make them more complex.

1. Where did Son and Quyen go on their last vacation?
2. Why did they go there?
3. How did they get there?
4. Where did they stay?
5. Why did they stay there?
6. What did they do there?
7. How long was their vacation?



Writing (lower level)

Write a story about your last vacation. (Students use the story they read as a model)

My name is Huong. I live in Hanoi with my husband Quang and my daughter Ha. On our last vacation, we went to Da Nang. We got there by plane. We stayed in a hotel for five nights. While we were there, we went swimming and relaxed on the beach. We also visited Hoi An and ate the local food. It was a fun vacation!

Writing (higher level)

Write a story about your last vacation. (Students use the story they read as a model)

My name is Linh. My husband Thanh and I live in Hanoi. One of our favorite hobbies is visiting new places. On our last holiday, we decided to go to Nha Trang, because we love the sea. We often travel by car, but it's a long way, so we decided to fly there instead. Na Trang has a lot of great accommodations. We stayed at a beautiful resort for five days, because it was right on the beach. While we were there, we went swimming every day, and we also relaxed on the beach. In addition, we got massages and enjoyed the delicious local seafood. All in all, it was a great vacation!

Sharing & Questions

What activities have you done to address different levels?



Topics

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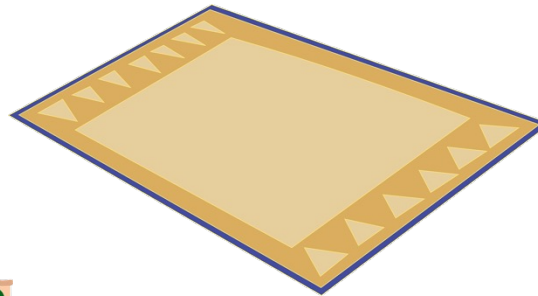
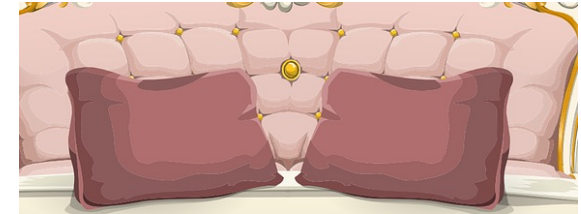
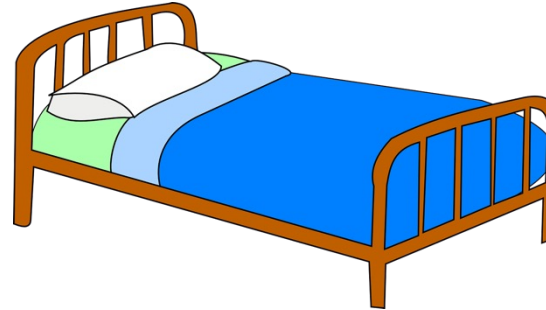
Level-Based Stations

- Create stations where students have different tasks
- The tasks at each station are harder for the higher-level students, but the context is the same
- Sample Activity
 - Teach vocabulary and prepositions first
 - Have 3 stations
 - Vocabulary and Grammar Review
 - Speaking
 - Writing



Stations (lower level) – Vocabulary

- Matching activities work well



wardrobe bed plant rug mirror stool vanity fan picture pillows nightstand

Stations (higher level) - Vocabulary

- Put students into pairs or groups of three
- Students take turns describing vocabulary words
- The other student or students have to guess which word they are describing
- If there is more time, students can write sentences using the words

wardrobe bed plant rug mirror stool vanity fan picture pillows nightstand

Stations (lower level) - Speaking

Students ask and answer questions.

Answers are simple.

A: Where are the pillows?

B: The pillows are **on** the bed.

A: Where is the stool?

B: The stool is **in front of** the vanity.

A: Where is the bed?

B: The bed is **between** the
nightstands.



Stations (higher level) - Speaking

*Students ask and answer questions.
Answers are more complex.*

A: Where is the fan?

B: The fan is **on** the floor **next to** the bed.

A: Where are the pictures?

B: The pictures are **on** the wall **above** the mirror.

A: Where is the bed?

B: The bed is **on** the rug **between** the nightstands.



Stations (lower level) - Writing

Students look at the picture and write simple sentences.

- 1. The wardrobe is next to the vanity.*
- 2. The bed is on the rug.*
- 3. The pictures are above the mirror.*
- 4. The nightstand is between the vanity and the bed.*



Stations (higher level) - Writing

Students look at the picture and write a story.

There are many things in my bedroom. My bed is on the rug between the nightstands. I have three plants. The large plant is on the floor in front of the curtains. One of the smaller plants is on the vanity, and the other one is on the shelf next to the wardrobe. There are three pictures on the wall above the mirror.



Stations (higher level) - Writing

For higher levels, it's also possible to use a different picture to make it more challenging.



Sharing & Questions

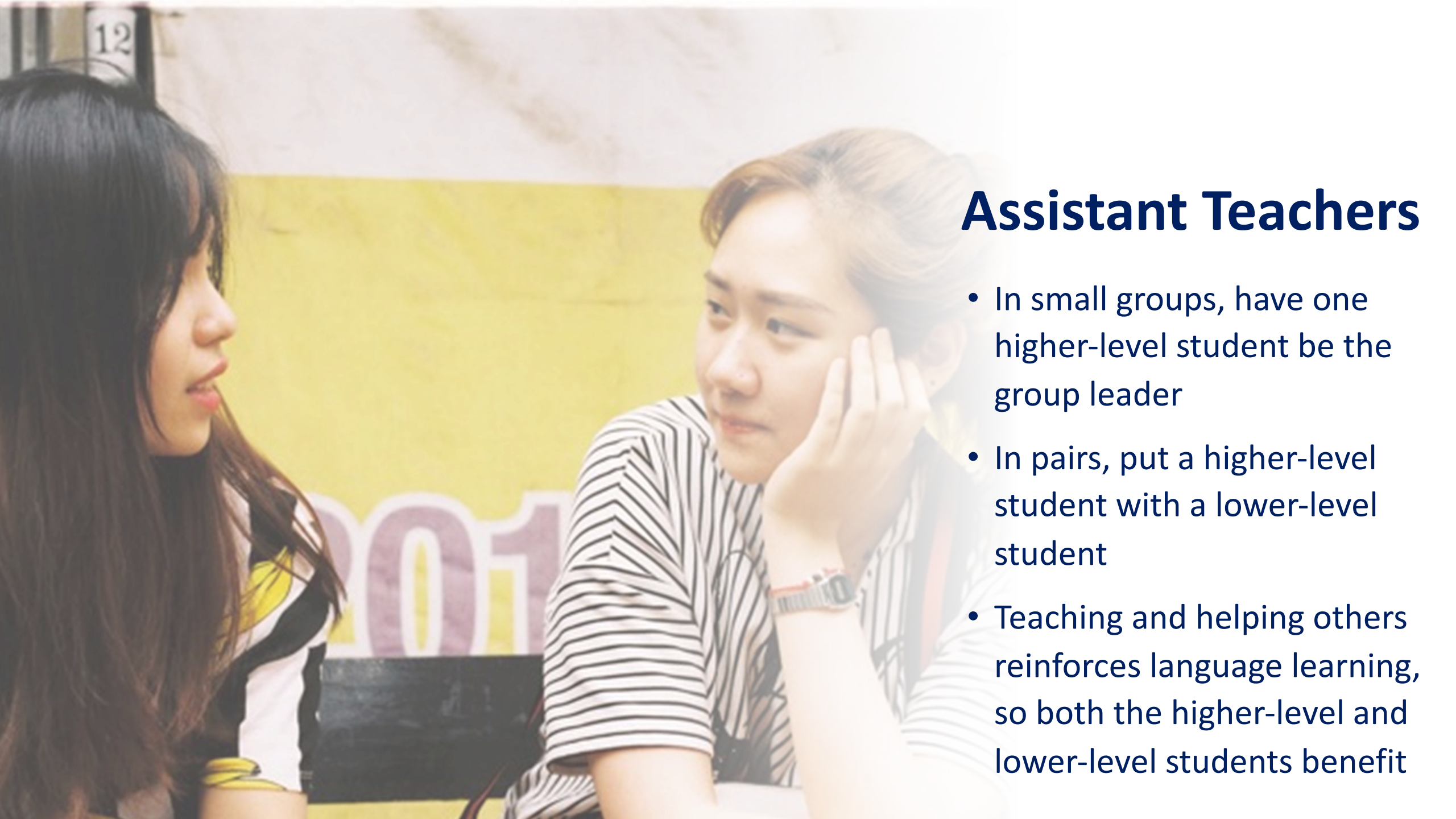
How can you use stations in your classroom?



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Assistant Teachers

- In small groups, have one higher-level student be the group leader
- In pairs, put a higher-level student with a lower-level student
- Teaching and helping others reinforces language learning, so both the higher-level and lower-level students benefit

Information Gap - Vacation

- Put students into groups of three
- Make the higher-level student the group leader
- Each student gets an advertisement about a trip
- Students first put their information into a chart
- Then, they ask each other questions to complete their chart
- Finally, they discuss the options and decide which trip to take
- The group leader facilitates the activity and discussion

ALASKAN ADVENTURE

Join us for an exciting adventure in Alaska!

- *Wildlife viewing*
- *Whale watching*
- *Hiking*
- *Fishing*
- *Kayaking*

Sleep in rustic cabins in the woods.

One-week vacations for just \$800! Everything included!



HAWAIIAN LUXURY CRUISE

Join us for a relaxing cruise in Hawaii!

- *Gourmet dining*
- *Nightly entertainment*
- *Discos and ballroom dancing*
- *Swimming and fitness classes*
- *Shore excursion at each stop*
- *First-class service*

Sleep in beautiful cabins on the ship.

Seven-night cruises start at \$1,200! All meals and drinks included!



EUROPEAN DISCOVERY

Join us for an amazing trip to Europe!

- *Discover historical cities*
- *Visit castles and forts*
- *Check out museums*
- *Take a boat trip down the Rhine River*
- *Taste the local food*

Sleep in historical hotels.

Seven-day trips for just \$1,500! Breakfast and lunch included!



Vacation

Trip			
Cost			
Accommodations			
Activities			

Vacation

Trip	<i>Alaskan Adventure</i>		
Cost	<i>\$800</i>		
Accommodations	<i>Rustic cabins in the woods</i>		
Activities	<i>Wildlife viewing Whale watching Hiking Fishing Kayaking</i>		

Vacation

Trip	<i>Alaskan Adventure</i>	<i>Hawaii Cruise</i>	
Cost	<i>\$800</i>		
Accommodations	<i>Rustic cabins in the woods</i>		
Activities	<i>Wildlife viewing Whale watching Hiking Fishing Kayaking</i>		

Vacation

Trip	<i>Alaskan Adventure</i>	<i>Hawaii Cruise</i>	
Cost	<i>\$800</i>	<i>\$1,200</i>	
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Vacation

Trip	<i>Alaskan Adventure</i>	<i>Hawaii Cruise</i>	
Cost	<i>\$800</i>	<i>\$1,200</i>	
Accommodations	<i>Rustic cabins in the woods</i>	<i>Beautiful cabins on the ship</i>	
Activities	<i>Wildlife viewing Whale watching Hiking Fishing Kayaking</i>		

Vacation

Trip	<i>Alaskan Adventure</i>	<i>Hawaii Cruise</i>	<i>European Discovery</i>
Cost	<i>\$800</i>	<i>\$1,200</i>	<i>\$1,500</i>
Accommodations	<i>Rustic cabins in the woods</i>	<i>Beautiful cabins on the ship</i>	<i>Historical Hotels</i>
Activities	<i>Wildlife viewing Whale watching Hiking Fishing Kayaking</i>	<i>Gourmet dining Entertainment Dancing Swimming Fitness classes Shore excursions</i>	<i>Historical cities Castles and forts Museums Boat trip down the Rhine River Local food</i>

Sharing & Questions

In what ways do you utilize your more advanced students?



Topics

- Identifying Levels
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Final Thoughts

- Having multiple levels is not a barrier to learning
- Implementing effective strategies can help meet the needs of all students
- Designing different versions of materials can address the students' levels
- Utilizing higher-level students as assistant teachers can create a win-win atmosphere
- Incorporating stations with different activities is fun and effective
- Mastering the multilevel classroom is exciting and rewarding

Sharing & Questions

What was the most valuable thing you learned today?



References

- Bruhn, Dieter, *TEFL Certificate Program*, 2020.
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Thank you!

Questions or concerns?

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Reflection Questions

1. What are some time-saving techniques you can employ when preparing for multilevel instruction? In particular, consider ideas related to materials preparation, students' roles, and assessment.
2. Have you ever prepared more than one set of materials about a common topic for students of different proficiency levels? What went well? What might you do differently?
3. Which activity seen in today's webinar could you adapt or adopt for your classes?



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